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**BOTSWANA**

# CASE STUDY

## Cattle Farmers Push for Policy Reform

### Cattle producers seek trade liberalization in the beef and cattle sector



Photo: Philip Fischer

Cattle farmer Philip Fischer's herd grazes in Botswana as he and other farmers push for an overhaul in government policy on cattle and beef.

***Thanks to technical assistance from USAID, the Botswana Cattle Producers Association is now recognized by businesses and government as the proper forum for consulting on matters related to the cattle industry.***

### Challenge

The beef and cattle industry has long been integral to Botswana's economy. Despite long-held hopes that it would contribute significantly to economic growth and alleviating poverty, it has never fully realized this potential. With recent losses by cattle farmers and declining exports from by the Botswana Meat Commission, the state-owned monopoly for beef exports, the industry now faces a serious crisis. Moreover, the industry is heavily protected, limiting the scope for trade and competition and preventing prices from adjusting to fit the climate.

### Initiative

USAID responded to a request from Botswana's cattle producers for assistance in forming a national association to represent and promote their economic interests. USAID's Southern Africa trade hub provided technical support to create the Botswana Cattle Producers Association and helped the association launch a campaign to persuade the government to liberalize the beef trade. USAID economic experts proposed alternatives for revitalizing the industry. The innovative proposals included: shifting to production of weaner calves; creating of a weaner calf auction system modeled on Namibia's; lifting the ban on live cattle exports; and dissolving the export monopoly enjoyed by the meat commission. As a result, cattle would sell for a higher price, benefitting farmers and providing an incentive for switching to weaner production. This, in turn would make more cattle available to the meat commission.

### Results

In May 2005 the Hub assembled industry stakeholders for a formal presentation of USAID's findings. A flood of media coverage on the proposed alternatives sparked a nationwide debate. As a result of the broad debate that emerged, significant progress has been made in convincing Botswana legislators to consider the recommendations. The Botswana Cattle Producers Association has gained an effective advocacy voice and an audience among decision makers in the country.

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